



Director's Rule 10-2016

Applicant: City of Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections	Page 1 of 2	Supersedes:
	Publication:	Effective:
Subject: Update of Environmentally Critical Areas Mapping	Code and Section Reference: SMC 25.09.030.A (Regulations for Environmentally Critical Areas)	
	Type of Rule: Map Update	
	Ordinance Authority: SMC 25.09.030A	
Index: Regulations for Environmentally Critical Areas	Approved Nathan Torgelson	Date

PURPOSE

This rule updates the advisory map for steep slope Environmentally Critical Areas (ECAs). Attached is a map showing the proposed steep slope layer, and a map showing a comparison of the proposed steep slope layer to the current steep slope layer. You can view the maps on the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections website, www.seattle.gov/sdci. The authority for updating the map is Seattle Municipal Code (SMC) 25.09.030.A, *Regulations for Environmentally Critical Areas*, which states that “the Director may update or amend the maps by Director’s Rule”.

The existing steep slope area map was adopted by Ordinance 116253 in 1992, and it is based upon aerial topography from about 1956 with steep slope areas digitized from existing paper maps. “Steep slope” is defined as a slope with an incline of 40% or more (10 feet of vertical rise over a horizontal distance of 25 feet or less) with a height of at

least 10 feet. You can find more information about the definition of steep slope in SMC 25.09.020A, Environmentally critical areas definitions.

BASIS FOR UPDATED STEEP SLOPE ECA MAPPING

The updated advisory steep slope critical areas are based upon the 2001 LIDAR contours (Puget Sound LIDAR Consortium) and the 1993 topographic contours from aerial photos. We used both sets of contours to develop the updated map because each type of mapping has strengths and weaknesses. LIDAR is generally better where there is heavy vegetation or tree cover. The 1993 topographic contours may be more accurate in areas where there are retaining walls.

The steep slope area map is called “advisory” because the mapping is used by the Seattle Department of Construction and Inspections for initial information and screening. Whether or not a site is eventually treated as an environmentally critical area is based on the actual topography of the ground surface.

The advisory steep slope areas for the northern and southern thirds of the City are based upon a combination of the 2001 LIDAR and the 1993 topographic contours. Because of time constraints, the advisory steep slope areas map for the center third of the City is based only on the 2001 LIDAR information.